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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1	1. A method for closing a communications stream between a first terminal
2	and a second terminal in a communications system, the communications stream having
3	repeating time slots in a time division channel comprising:

- sending a closing message in a first slot from the first terminal to the second terminal to request that the communications stream be closed;
- listening to the communications stream at the first terminal to determine whether
 any messages are sent from the second terminal to the first terminal in a slot after the first
 slot; and
 - closing the stream, if no further messages are received from the second terminal.
 - 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the repeating time slots comprise a set of repeating slots for the second terminal and wherein closing the stream comprises closing the stream if no further messages are received in the next slot for the second terminal after sending the closing message.
 - 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the communications stream comprises a data traffic channel and wherein sending a closing message comprises sending a closing message in the data traffic channel.
- 1 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein closing the stream comprises sending a 2 further closing message in a second slot from the first terminal to the second terminal, if a 3 further message is received from the second terminal.
- 1 5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising checking a transmit buffer in 2 the first terminal and wherein sending a closing message is performed in response to an 3 absence of data in the buffer.

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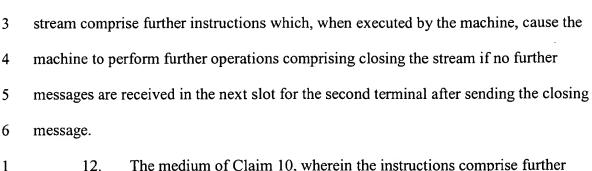
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- 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein sending a closing message is performed 1 in response to an absence of data in a transmit buffer for more than a determined amount 2 3 of time.
- 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the determined amount of time is selected 1 2 to be greater than the amount of time required to close the communications stream and 3 then open a new communications stream.
 - 8. The method of Claim 1, wherein listening to the communications stream comprises listening at the first terminal in a sequence of slots after the first slot, the number of slots in the sequence being determined by the possibility of being able to distinguish a message from the second terminal from noise in the channel.
 - 9. The method of Claim 8 wherein the number of slots in the sequence is determined by a class of modulation being used for the stream.
 - 10. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:
 - sending a closing message in a first slot of a communications stream from the first terminal to the second terminal to request that the communications stream be closed the stream having repeating time slots in a time division channel;
 - listening to the communications stream at the first terminal to determine whether any messages are sent from the second terminal to the first terminal in a slot after the first slot; and
- 10 closing the stream, if no further messages are received from the second terminal.
- 1 11. The medium of Claim 10, wherein the repeating time slots comprise a set 2 of repeating slots for the second terminal and wherein the instructions for closing the



- 12. The medium of Claim 10, wherein the instructions comprise further instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising checking a transmit buffer in the first terminal and wherein the instructions for sending a closing message are performed in response to an absence of data in the buffer.
 - 13. The medium of Claim 10, wherein the instructions for sending a closing message are performed in response to an absence of data in a transmit buffer for more than a determined amount of time.
 - 14. A method of determining to close a communications stream between a first terminal and a second terminal in a communications system comprising: checking a transmit buffer for data to transmit in the stream; waiting for a determined amount of time; rechecking the transmit buffer; and
- determining to close the communications stream, if there is no data in the transmit buffer to transmit after the checking and the rechecking.

1	15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the determined amount of time is
2	selected to be greater than the amount of time required to close the communications
3	stream and then open a new communications stream.
1	16. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:
2	determining whether previously transmitted data included a data boundary value;
3	comparing the boundary value to the data previously transmitted; and
4	if the data boundary value is satisfied then determining to close the
5	communications stream.
1	17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates the
2	size of a data packet to be transmitted.
1	18. The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates
2	streaming data with no predetermined endpoint.
1	19. The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates a
2	diagnostic sequence.
1	20. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:
2	checking a higher layer protocol to determine whether all data units to be
3	transmitted have been received; and
4	determining to close the communications stream, if all of the data units to be
5	transmitted have been received and there is no data in the data buffer after the checking
6	and rechecking.
1	21. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing
2	sequences of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to
3	perform operations comprising:

	4	checking a transmit buffer a first terminal for data to transmit in a
	5	communications stream;
	6	waiting for a determined amount of time;
	7	rechecking the transmit buffer; and
	8	determining to close the communications stream, if there is no data in the transmit
	9	buffer to transmit after the checking and the rechecking.
	1	22. The medium of Claim 21, further comprising instructions which, when
	2	executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising:
	3	determining whether previously transmitted data included a data boundary value;
/: 5TA	4	comparing the boundary value to the data previously transmitted; and
THE COLUMN TWO THE BUILDINGS	5	if the data boundary value is satisfied then determining to close the
U	6	communications stream.
- -	1	23. The medium of Claim 22, wherein the data boundary value indicates the
	2	size of a data packet to be transmitted.
	1	24. The medium of Claim 21, further comprising instructions which, when
**************************************	2	executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising:
	3	checking a higher layer protocol to determine whether all data units to be
	4	transmitted have been received; and
	5	determining to close the communications stream, if all of the data units to be
	6	transmitted have been received and there is no data in the data buffer after the checking
	7	and rechecking.